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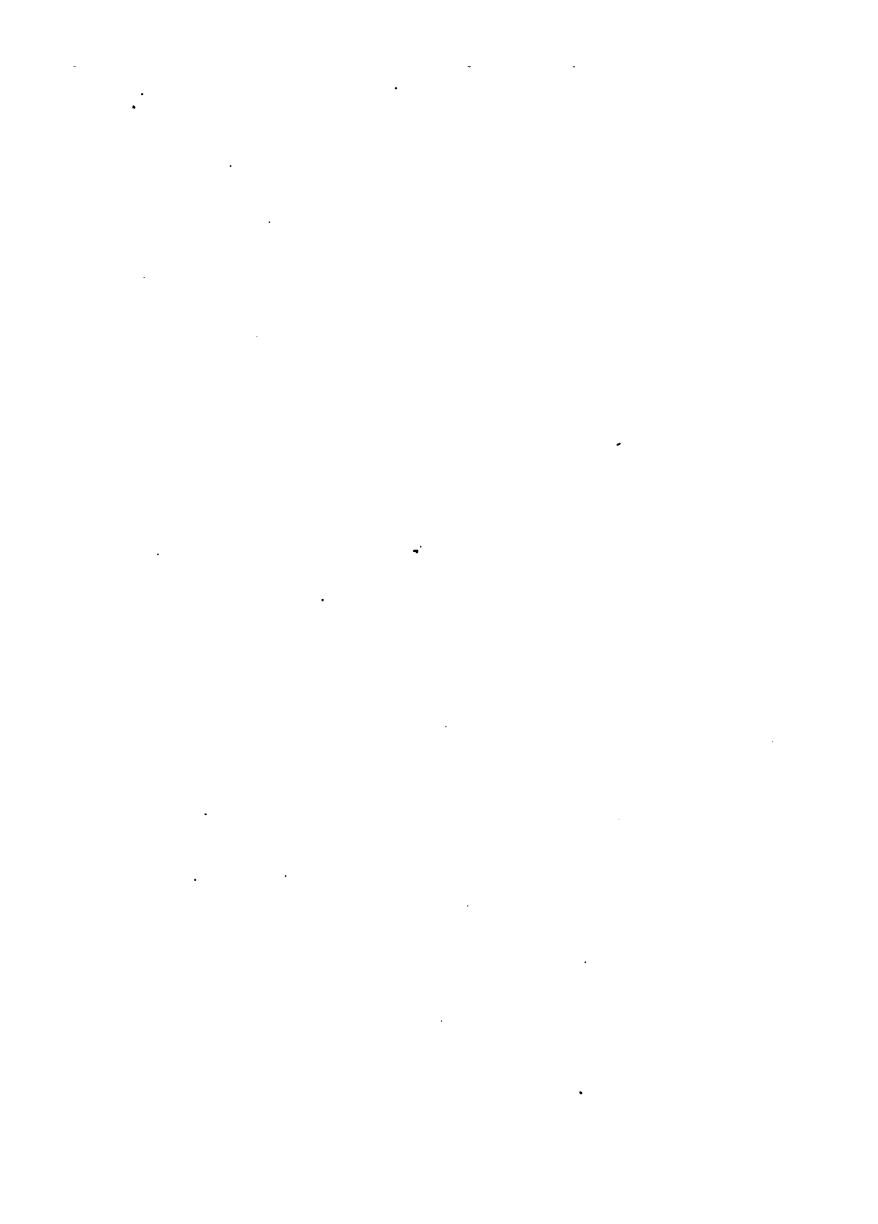
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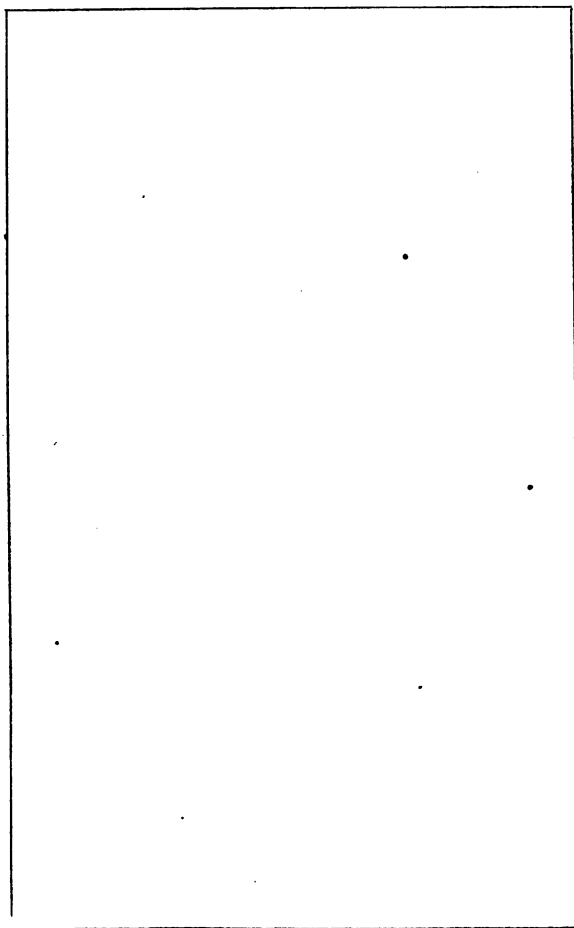
Words for those who must Carry
at Home.

BY
ANDREW A. BONAR, D.D.
AUTHOR OF "MEMOIR OF R. M. M'CHEYNE," ETC.



LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
MDCCCLXXIX.

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Introduction.

‘THE grace of our Lord is exceeding abundant.’ It has been so from the first, and He has shown its overflowing fulness in the intense and never-ceasing interest taken in each of His own, whatever be their circumstances in life. What is true of the Church, is true of each individual member of it. ‘He loved the Church and gave Himself for it.’ ‘He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.’

Eph. v. 25.
Gal. ii. 20.

What is here written is for the lonely ones of God’s people,—the sick, the weak, the obscure. In the arrangements of the Old Testament, and in Jehovah’s words to Israel, very much is said to draw attention to ‘*the stranger*,’ who must always have felt lonely; and in our Lord’s history, how continually is He found turning aside to ‘*the sick*.’ So that we need not wonder if we find something in the Types,

also, that speaks the same deep interest in those of God's family who may often think themselves overlooked, and who often fancy themselves useless in the Church.

Accordingly, an incident in the life of David brings this before us. David's name means '*Beloved*,' and he is in many ways a type of the Saviour. Besides other more obvious points, we might show this typical character attaching to him and to his actions, in such cases as the Gathering in the Cave of Adullam, the Propitiatory present of Abigail, Mephibosheth invited to the King's table, and perhaps even in the episode of the Egyptian slave deserted by his master. But our thoughts are to be turned at present to another scene, fully related in 1 Sam. xxix. 9-25, which seems beyond doubt to claim a place among the things of which the Holy Ghost, by the pen of Paul, has said, 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.' It was written in

1 Sam. xxii.
2.

1 Sam. xviii.
25-35.

2 Sam. ix.

1 Sam. xxix.
11-15.

Rom. xv. 4.

order that we in our day, applying this incident of the Old Testament to our own case, might have our expectations raised, expectations of help and blessing and favour, and so go on patiently till we at last reach all that is laid up for us in the Blessed Hope. Just as the Holy Ghost says again by Paul to the Corinthians, 'These things are written to admonish us on whom the ends of the world¹ have come'—no doubt to counsel and guide those of old times, but as really for the instruction of us who live in the last period of God's dispensations of grace.

1 Cor. x. 11.

As already stated, what these pages present is to be directed very specially to the lonely ones of God's people; to those who *must* 'tarry at home;' and to all who oftentimes mourn that they are not able to do work for God in the way others do. They will also meet the case of those who are conscious of not possessing much ability, their powers of mind not being such as fit them

Psalm lxxviii.
12.

¹ The last of those periods allotted to the present order of things.

Hodge.

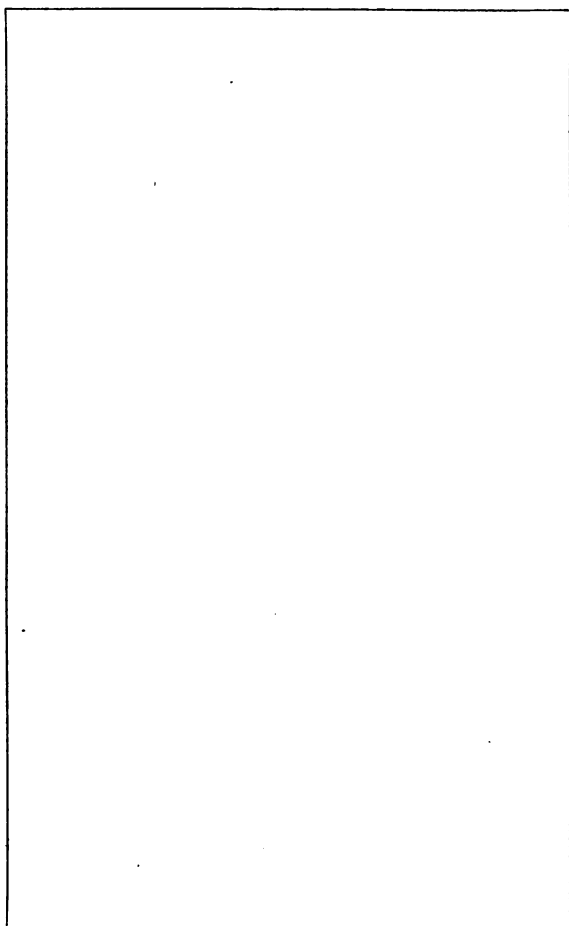
for public work, or work beyond their own little circle, though they long to carry blessing to the whole world !

We must remember the holy sovereignty of Him who is God and Saviour, while we seek to speak words of cheer to those on whom the restraining hand of the Lord seems to lie heavily. 'Omnipotency and sovereignty,' says an old writer, 'thus differ. Omnipotency looks simply at what the Lord *can* do ; but sovereignty to what He freely *wills* to do or not do, according to His holy and gracious pleasure.' What a preacher of the faith He *could* have made the delivered demoniac to be, and how the man longed to be like one of His Apostles, ever at His side ; but the Lord saw it best to arrange otherwise, giving him this other sphere, '*Go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee.*' In the little family of disciples three were privileged above the rest, on special occasions ; and yet one of these favoured three died by the sword of Herod ere he had well begun his ministry. 'His ways are not our ways.'

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Chapter I.

DAVID'S SIX HUNDRED MEN.

IN our country's history, in recent days, who has not read of the famous 'Six Hundred' at Balaclava? But here are *Six Hundred* more famous in heaven than they; for their spiritual history has in it many features that may interest and help the Church of God in every age. Four hundred of these men gathered round David in the Cave of Adullam, as related in 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2. That cave was like some of the places of retreat and defence in the African Transvaal,—one of which is 2000 feet long and more than 400 broad,—penetrating far back, so that any number of men may lodge there.¹

¹ The Palestine Exploration Reports do not seem to have succeeded in attempting to find for Adullam another site than the generally admitted one near Tekoah and Bethlehem.

Hither came persons who were in distress, or straits, persons who had debts which they could not pay, and persons who were 'bitter of soul,' finding nothing to satisfy them. They were fit to form a type of the sinners that leave all and come to Christ. You were forced by distress to inquire about Christ? You found out your enormous debt to God, and heard the summons to the judgment-seat? You had no rest, no satisfaction in all that man could offer? You heard of '*the Beloved*,' and that with Him is rest, safety, heaven begun.

Isa. lv. 4.

When any of these men of Judah came to Adullam, they were at once reported to the Captain, David. No question was asked as to their former life, in order to furnish a qualification for admittance. The testing question was simple and easily answered. Each must agree to take David for 'Leader and Commander.' Are you willing to let him rule over you? Are you willing to let him mould your character? If that question be answered 'Yes,' then

the man enters the Adullam cave, and is enrolled among the followers of David. And then begins a change; the psalms sung on the harp of the sweet singer of Israel not only engage and attract and delight, but breathe holy truth through the soul. And then, too, the holy life of the Captain, and his words of grace, have wondrous power. The men gathered there are so disciplined and conformed to the law that of them it is testified, 'The men were a wall unto us by night and by day; very good to us; we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, so long as we were conversant with them.'

Besides, think of their safety in that cave, with all the thickness of the rock between them and the storm, and between them and foes without;—a type of a sinner's safety when he flees to Christ. But more still; we have here a shadowing forth of the influence of a believed Gospel both on the present life of the man who receives Christ, and his future prospects. 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath ap-

1 Sam. xxv.
15.

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

peared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.' But it teaches us also (like David's men anticipating the day when they should see David on the throne) to be 'looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

Such seems to be the teaching of the Adullam gathering. And we must add, that from time to time that company received accessions, so that soon we find Two Hundred more have joined them. David's company, during the days of his preparation for the kingdom, while the time of ascending the throne had not come, amounted generally to about *Six Hundred* men. We find this noticed in 1 Sam. xxv. 13, xxvii. 2, and other places.¹ It was like Christ's

¹ An ingenious and interesting suggestion has been made, that '*King David's spears and*

'little flock,' not large in number, but all of them 'called, and chosen, and faithful.' And fervent love to their Captain was a marked characteristic of every one. They hesitated not to say of Him, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us.' And who is there of all whose eyes the Holy Spirit has opened that does not say and sing in his heart—'If I were over head and ears in the believed, apprehended, and seen love of the Son of God, it were the fulfilling of my desires for the only happiness I would be at! He is my morning and evening song, the top and root of my joys, the heart and flower and yolk of all my soul's delights! Oh, that I had love to fill a

1 Sam. xviii.
3-

shields that were in the temple of the Lord,' 'The spears, and bucklers, and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of God,' were no other than the weapons of that famous band, deposited there as testimonials of former days of warfare and victory, —like Goliath's sword laid up behind the Ephod in the Holy Place.

2 Chron.
xxiii. 9.

Was Ittai's company of "Six Hundred" formed on the model of David's?

2 Sam. xv.
18.

S. Rutherford.

thousand worlds that I might empty my soul of it all upon Christ !' And no wonder, when we remember what He is to us, and what He has done, and how all 'our guiltiness, when it falleth into the sea of His mercy, is but like a drop of blood falling into the great ocean.' 'Oh, there is yet an unfound world of His love.'¹

¹ A minister in Scotland, Mr. Durham, was one day very depressed in spirit, as he approached his end. His colleague came in and asked how he was. 'Very low; there is but one promise in all the Scriptures that I dare look to; "*Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.*" May I venture my salvation upon it?' 'Yes, surely,' was the reply; 'if you had a thousand souls you might venture them on that word.' And may we not say that the Saviour's words contain yet more than this? They declare that our David not only will *not refuse* any coming one, but also that He will *never part with him* when He has received him. He will in no wise do as Abraham did to Ishmael; He will never part with a son of His and send him away to wander.

Chapter II.

THE TWO HUNDRED WHO TARRIED
BY THE STUFF.

IT is a curious fact that among the Six Hundred of David's company there were always a goodly number not fit for active service. There was about a third part who were better fitted for watching than for fighting. When David is at Maon, in the region of that Carmel which overhung the Dead Sea, he prepares for an assault, and leaves behind on that occasion '*Two Hundred*,' whose business was to '*abide by the stuff*,'—that is, sit by the luggage, or things left in their keeping, till the rest returned. When, on another great occasion, viz., the taking of Ziklag, David's men got ready for the pursuit and the battle, we again find '*Two Hundred*' who '*abode behind*;' or (as the He-

1 Sam. xxv.
13.

1 Sam. xxix.
9, 10.

brew has it) 'who *stood still*,' instead of moving on—the Hebrew word being the same as Joshua x. 13, when the sun 'stood still.' Fain would they have gone forth like the sun on his course; but they were physically disabled, and found that they must be content to sit still.

These *Two Hundred* were as attached as the rest to David; it was no want of affection that kept them behind. They were eager to promote his interests, and would gladly have done work for him on the battle-field. But it is said, 'They were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.' They had tried to march on, but their strength failed; they had become languid, like (as the word signifies) a dead carcase that must stretch itself along. A picture surely of real exhaustion! They must, therefore, be 'left behind;' and David at once arranges that it shall be so. It is expressly said, '*They made them abide at the brook*;' it was a matter of gentle compulsion.

1 Sam. xxx.
10.

1 Sam. xxx.
9.

1 Sam. xxx.
21.

The brook Besor¹ furnished a convenient spot for this company waiting for the return of their companions. The little stream of running water, softly murmuring, fringed by oleanders perhaps, and with some palm-trees' shade besides, might seem to be too quiet

¹ There is meaning in most of the names given to places in these Eastern countries ; but we are not sure what *Besor* signifies. One of the best-known writers on Hebrew words derives it from an Arabic root which means 'cold,' not as ice is, but as *cold water*. We are led to think of the stream running along in a deep bed, where its refreshing water was protected from the sun. At the present day we cannot find a brook that altogether corresponds to what we seek. South of Gaza, however, as one goes toward Egypt, there is the bed of a stream, *Wady Bashkkeh*, or *Wady Sheriah*, not more than three miles south from the supposed ruins of Ziklag (now Khurbet Zuheilikhah, or Azlug). The weary ones of David's band pressed on from Ziklag till they could march no farther ; and somewhere here-about is the spot at which they tarried. Though now the sand of the desert has been swept by the winds into the bed of the stream, so that water runs there only after the rains, it was not so in other days when trees and cultivation were there.

and peaceful for men who would fain have been warriors, and have rushed on Amalek in the battle-field ; but it is appointed by David that here they shall remain for a season, and await the issue of events. He, on his part, has not one thought of upbraiding in regard to them. He would gladly have used their help ; but since that cannot be, he has only sympathy to express in their behalf. How lonely they feel when their companions are out of sight ! How sad to be inactive ! apparently useless ! No opportunity of doing any deed that might at least show their love to their captain ! Yet so, in the providence of God, it has come about. They must let their weapons lie unused, and seek to be able to say, 'Thy will be done !'

And let us ask, Is there ever, and has there ever been, a time in the Church of God when there were not a goodly number corresponding to those 'Two Hundred' ? It is very plain that the Lord takes care always to have among His followers '*Two hundred who are so faint that they cannot go over the brook*

*Besor.*¹ We say that not only are there such, but that He arranges matters so that there shall be at all times such a company of faint ones. There are the sick, the frail, the aged, the blind, the suffering whose pains unfit them many hours in the day and night for thought. There are, besides, feeble-minded followers, whose hearts are burning with love and zeal, but who cannot exercise any gift. Our David knows them all. He blames none of them, as if they were slothful or selfish; He understands too well what a trial it is to them to be thus kept behind, when others go forth in full vigour to work and labour. He knows them, and He does not forget them.¹

The trial, however, does not consist merely in being left behind, and left, perhaps, without company; for the Lord's people know something of the art of making up in God whatever is missed in the creature. In the fellow-

¹ It was Jehovah himself who in the days of Moses so reprobated Amalek, saying, 'he smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble, when thou wast *faint and weary*; and he feared not God.'

Deut. xxv.
18.

ship of their God they may find what-ever is desirable in the creature, and find it in an infinitely more excellent way. 'Mother,' said a dying son, 'dry up your tears, you will find *me* in the *all-sufficiency* of God.' It is not, then, this want which those left behind feel most. There is something else. They feel as if they were no more needed by their Lord, and they can scarcely help envying their more favoured brethren who are gone forth to active service.

In such an hour think of the *Lord Jesus in Nazareth*. Thirty years of obscurity and neglect! And think of the matchless obedience to His Father rendered by these thirty years! And think of that same Jesus now every hour bending over you in deepest sympathy! for you are His members, and 'In all your affliction He is afflicted.' Do you not hear Him say, 'I know thy tribulation.' 'I will water thee *every moment*,' as well as 'keep thee night and day.' Now is your time for learning meekness and gentleness—the sap of the Vine flowing into the branch!

Rev. ii. 9.
Isa. xxvii. 3.

meekness, gentleness, and Nazareth-like obedience.

But let us return to the brook. David's Two Hundred—how their heart sinks as the last sound of the tramp of the Four Hundred fades on their ear, and all is still. They follow them in their heart, and they know that David has not forgotten them, but will be thinking of them amid the battle. Even as yonder, in another region, you may see one of the Church's Two Hundred—you may see at Miletum *Trophimus* lying sick, and left there on his sick-bed. How eagerly, how wistfully he looks from his chamber on Paul setting off on his journeying for Christ, and longs to go with him. But he is too faint; he must abide at the brook Besor. Why did not Paul heal him by miracle? What can it be but that the Lord (the same Lord who purposely remained two days where He was till Lazarus' sickness should end in death) wished Trophimus to be sick as really as He wished Paul to be strong? It was not in Paul's power to work a miracle

2 Tim. iv. 2c.

of healing except when empowered to do so at the time by some intimation from the Lord ; and in this case the Lord wished this servant, whom He truly loved, to stay behind at the brook Besor.

3 John 2.

And there, at Ephesus, you see another noble follower of the Lord, Gaius, sent to join the Two Hundred at the brook. For John gets no commission to heal his body and restore health, though he longs to see him thus restored. As the vessel that sails from Ephesus, carrying John away to some other region to preach the Gospel, disappears on the horizon, Gaius (who has strained his eyes till they were dim in following it) leaves the window, or the house-top, and lies down again on his couch, somewhat sad, but yet able to look up and say, ' Thy will be done !'

At that moment, when you are most desponding, we can come in and bring you this assurance, ' Be of good cheer, the Father has not left you alone. The desire of Him who is the Desire of all nations is toward you ; only be still and know that He is God.'

Chapter III.

THE SERVICE OF THE TWO HUNDRED
AND ITS EXPERIENCES.

WHETHER at Carmel, by the Dead Sea, or at Besor-brook, that company left behind were occupied in real service to David and his men. They 'abode by the stuff,' it is said, which implies their care over it; and that care over it implies not only *watching* but *prayer*. Well did they know that all safety depended on the presence of the God of Israel, and we may be sure their psalms of praise and their prayers went up all the time they watched there. Refreshed by this prayerful waiting, Besor is becoming to them truly 'cold water to thirsty souls.' But much more is included than at first sight appears.

1 Sam. xxv.
13.

1. Their calm submission and contented obedience was real service—a

lesson for all the host, a lesson greatly needed to be learnt by the more ardent spirits who went off to battle with a good deal, it may be, of carnal satisfaction at having active work to do. How much more glorifying to God was that holy acquiescence in the Divine will, which might be found in the unostentatious contentment of not a few among the faint and weary.

We should have greatly liked to have heard one psalm from that company ! But if that cannot be, it is possible to find such melodies among the Church's Two Hundred.¹

¹ 'Sorrow hath pressed many sweet songs out of me,' said Luther.

Here is one from Tersteegen's harp—

'Thou sweet beloved Will of God !

My anchor-ground, my fortress-hill !

The Spirit's silent, fair abode—

In Thee I hide me, and am still.

'O Will, that willest good alone,

Lead Thou the way ; Thou guidest best.

A silent child I follow on

And trusting lean upon Thy breast.'

Faint and weary one, you glorify the Lord by your peaceful submission. Suffering one, your every effort to be patient and unselfish, like the Lamb led to the slaughter, is true service rendered to the Master. Sick and languid saint, remember He does not wish you at this present time to sing or pray, perhaps not even to meditate. You are too faint to cross the brook Besor; He wishes you to *lie still and let Him care for you*. As a mother wishes nothing better than that her sick child would only receive her attentive care, and give her a look of love.

We noticed before that in 1 Sam. xxx. 21 it is said of David and his warriors, '*They made the two hundred*

Again his harp sounds—

'God's will doth make the bitter sweet,
And all is good when it is done;
Unless God's will do hallow it,
The glory of all joy is gone.

'Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will.'

remain at the brook ;' they compelled them so to do. This man from Bethlehem is sure he could go on ; and if he could not fight, he could be an armour-bearer ! This other from Tekoah is almost certain that the march will revive him and recruit his strength ! And this follower from Hebron thinks that possibly he may recover quickly and be fit for service, just as Jonathan's faintness passed away at the taste of the dropping honey. How reluctantly did these remain behind ! As among ourselves, from time to time we find willing workers who are not able to work, and must be '*made to abide* at the brook.' And all this we have among ourselves. This zealous disciple is feeble in health, but insists on going out to some meeting ; and this other cannot be kept from a Sabbath class or from being at the Communion-table, though all the while ready to faint. Friends are obliged to do as was done at the brook, when '*They made them remain there.*' 'You cannot go ; you will

only injure yourself ; you are tempting Providence ! The Lord will have mercy, and not sacrifice.' You might have heard such expostulations in the camp of David, even as you hear them now. And let such disciples always remember that yielding, in satisfied submission, to these friendly remonstrances, is service done to the Master.¹

But a suffering one asks—' May such a one as I, who can say no more than that I have obtained like precious faith with them in the great atoning Sacrifice, ever expect to attain that happy delight in the will of God that is spoken of as the privilege of the saints under suffering, and trial, and crosses, in Col. i. 11 ? ' Let us see. In that passage, the Holy Ghost, by Paul, enjoins believers to pray ' to be strengthened with all strength according to His glorious power, so as to

2 Pet. i. 11.

¹ One of our fathers wrote to a weary one ; ' *Believe that He means good to you.* You will find Him very loath to make you sad. Look for good from Him. Promise it to yourself from Him. Expect it even out of these sad things.'

J. Carstairs.

attain *all manner of patience and long-suffering*, the very opposite of impatience and fretful peevishness ; and even more still, all this '*with joy*'—joyful moments like gleams of sunshine. Now, the Holy Ghost will assuredly convey to us from the Father whatever we are able to ask for in Christ's name, saying, 'Christ warranted Me to say that this is agreeable to His will.' And in this case surely you are warranted to go to the mercy-seat and say, 'Lord, He whom Thou hearest always has bidden me come to Thee for all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.' Thus ask, and it shall be given. The sap of the Vine will assuredly flow to the branch. And, O patient saint, little do you know how many may be learning by you the grace and power of the Lord Jesus. It may be that angels will be taught by looking on you. No hard thoughts of God—no repining—though there goes up at times the cry, 'Lord, I am oppressed ; undertake for me !'

2. It is only now and here, in this world, that you can have the opportunity of glorifying the Lord in this manner. There is a sense in which that word may be applied to your case. 'To you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer.' This is a kind of service that angels cannot render, and which it is given only to some saints to render, and can be given only now. It is true martyr-service, when all is borne in His strength, and Himself the only witness. A martyr, witnessing for Christ at the stake or on the rack, had the help of many who stood by, and his season of trial was brief; but you witness to the Lord's supporting grace and secret consolations for days, months, and years.

Such peculiar fragrance from 'the Lily among "thorns"' is most acceptable to Him whose you are and whom you serve. It is not 'the breathing of a broken heart,' but of a 'soul resigned.' Every such one shall be remembered in the Day of Christ as

Phil. i. 29.

Song ii. 2.

having glorified Him, even in the furnace, beyond others.¹

Hab. iii. 17,
18.

¹ The world hears you sing, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: *yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*' The world hears you sing thus, and wonders if you mean what you sing; and the Lord, *for the world's sake* as much as for your own, puts you in circumstances where you are fully tested. There is an incident related, in another department, that may illustrate, though perhaps somewhat roughly, what we mean. 'Just before setting out for Belgium, Napoleon sent for the cleverest artisan of his class in Paris, and demanded of him whether he would engage to make a coat of mail to be worn under the ordinary dress, which should be absolutely bullet-proof; and that, if so, he might name his own price for such a work. The man engaged to make the desired piece of work, if allowed proper time; and named 18,000 francs (£720) as the price of it. The bargain was concluded, and in due time the work was produced, and the artisan was honoured with a second audience of the Emperor. "Now," said his Imperial Majesty, "put it on." The

Once more. You are *left alone* in a quiet room—it may be a garret—and seldom are the steps of any sympathizing friends heard approaching. From day to day you are left thus lonely, and are often sick and weary. But do you not remember it once was thus with John the Baptist? He was hurried away from the scenes of a mighty

man did so. "As I am to stake my life on its efficacy, you will, I suppose, have no objection to do the same?" saying which the Emperor took a brace of pistols and prepared to discharge one at the breast of the astonished artist. There was no retreating, however, and, half dead with fear, the man stood the fire; and, to the infinite credit of his work, with perfect impunity. But the Emperor was not content with one trial. He fired the second pistol at the back of the artist, and afterwards discharged another shot with a fowling-piece with similar effect. "Well," said the Emperor, "you have produced a capital work, undoubtedly. What is the price of it?" "Eighteen thousand francs," said the man, "were named as the agreed sum." "There is an order for them," said the Emperor; "and there is another for an equal sum for the fright I have given you."

Luke vii. 23.

movement, and lodged in the cell of a gloomy prison beyond Jordan. Very few were they who came or were admitted to see him. Months passed, and every day John hoped to hear the voice of his Master coming to the prison to speak a few words in person to His servant. But it was not so. No doubt, for our sakes, the Baptist was asked to be satisfied with knowing that this way of dealing with His saints seemed wise and good to the Lord, who will explain all in the day of His appearing.¹ 'Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me,' was the word sent to calm the ruffled soul of the greatest among all the prophets. He was thus prepared to bear his lot of solitude, obscurity, and trouble in

¹ John Bunyan knew some of the class we are referring to. 'When I came,' says *Feeble-mind*, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' 'to the House of the Interpreter, I received much kindness; and because the Hill of Difficulty was too much for me, I was carried up by one of his servants.' And then he tells that not many pilgrims were willing to go so softly as

that prison, and then by the stroke of a soldier's sword to pass away, leaving his body to be buried anywhere. And yet the Master loved him with all His heart, and at His coming will crown that head of his with a glory that few in all the kingdom shall wear.

Remember, too, that meanwhile (as Milton under his blindness sang) 'they also serve who only stand and wait;' and their own spirit is blessed by their deep submission to the Lord. In the Middle Ages it was believed that to anoint the sword which caused the wound was the true way to heal the wound; indeed, that then the wound healed of itself. Certainly this is true in the case of the wounds the Lord's

he was forced to do; 'but still, as they came on, they bade me be of good cheer, and said that it is the will of the Lord that comfort should be given to the *feeble-minded*. As to the main, I thank Him that loves me I am fixed. My way is before me; my mind is beyond the river that has no bridge, though (as you see) I am but of *feeble-mind*.'

1 Thess. v.
14.

sword makes. We are healed in blessing Him who has done it.

3. But we return to the Brook Besor and those who were left there to 'tarry by the stuff.' David's Two Hundred were in body at the brook, but their hearts were with the host that had gone to the battle against Amalek. The Four Hundred knew well that they had their sympathy ; it shone forth in the long look they cast at them as they departed. And that sympathy was help to their comrades. Did you not hear them bid the company God-speed, and attempt a farewell cheer? and, feeble as were their voices, it went to the hearts of the Four Hundred warriors. The sympathy of the deeply interested crowd who (when the fireman essayed to reach the child at the window of the burning house, but seemed likely to be baffled and compelled to halt) by a hearty cheer nerved him to another and a successful effort, is never to be forgotten in its lesson. And who of God's children does not

feel the same help beaming from the very face of a Trophimus or a Gaius who bids us God-speed?

And meanwhile, would they not feed their souls on the Word? See David's men spread out the Books of Moses, and peruse the record of 'the days of the Right Hand of the Most High,' or the days of Joshua, and the Lord's presence and power against the enemy in terrible days. We may be serving the Lord much in thus meditating on His Word, even as others please Him by work for Him. The Lord likes to speak to us; and if so, He likes us to listen to His voice. He will in all ages have a company of disciples whose peculiar business is to search the Scriptures—to draw water from His wells and put it to the lips of those who come to visit them.

4. But if the Besorites (as we may call them)—the little company at the brook Besor, sitting under these palm-trees' shade, or stretched along on that grassy slope that hung over the

stream—read the Word and talked of it together, not less surely would they *pray*. The Word stirs us up to pray and praise. Probably that may be one reason why, in Joshua i. 8 and Psalm i. 2, 3, all prosperity in his walk and way is promised to the man who ‘meditates on the Law of the Lord day and night.’ Could they help crying to the Lord in behalf of their brethren who had gone forward to the fight, in whose victory or defeat was involved all that was dear to themselves? Would they not ‘watch unto prayer’? I should not wonder if they even began to perceive that in being left behind they had been promoted to a higher service, in some respects, than had fallen to the lot of those who went down to the field. They are like Moses, Aaron, and Hur on the hill at Rephidim, waiting on the God of Israel with the Rod uplifted toward heaven, in strong appeal to the Source of all power.

We point out this remarkable scene to all our lonely ones, to all our sick

and feeble. You can pray from time to time, and so you can mightily help *Joshua* fighting in the valley. Nay, 'how knowest thou but that thou wert laid aside (as Esther came to the kingdom) for such a time as this?' And if you sigh and say, 'But I am not able to continue in prayer—my bodily weakness and my mental feebleness go hand in hand,' we remind you that Moses is not said to have prayed in words, or in a direct manner, all that day to the going down of the sun. No; but he *held up the Rod heavenward* all the day—he kept looking up to Him who could help, and by his upward look and lifted Rod pointed Israel away from human strength to Divine omnipotence and Divine loving-kindness. Canst thou not thus lift the eye of faith, however weary?

The Church of God has been an immense gainer by such watching and prayer. Who can tell how every week, as the Day of Rest returns, the ministers of the Gospel, the angels of the Churches, are upheld by the prayers of

Est. iv. 14.

Col. iv. 12.

Phil. ii. 27.

members of their flock who must 'tarry at home'? These are they who have been promoted to the height of the hill, that there they may be as Moses, Aaron, and Hur. These are they who join that band of which Epaphras of Colosse will always be held in remembrance as one of the foremost—'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always *labouring fervently for you in prayers.*' This '*servant of Christ*' had this field of labour as his special department of work; and if (as some think) he was the same as Epaphroditus, then all the more heartily will you who 'tarry at home' hail him as leader of your band, for he was a long time 'sick nigh unto death.' Perhaps it was then he was lifted up to the rank of being one of the Lord's special 'Remembrancers.'

We have, indeed, too many cases of workers who, when laid aside by ill-health, have been unwilling to give themselves peculiarly to prayer, and so have missed promotion in the king-

dom. Sometimes such weary ones have despondingly thought themselves unfit for any service, and have not been blessed. But was it thus with Elijah sent to the Brook Cherith, or Paul sent to Arabia for a season? Some have, in such circumstances, tried the literary work of theology rather than prayer; but seldom at such a time has this succeeded, except in such a case as John Bunyan's, who all the while was one of the Lord's praying company. And if, in your sojourn at the brook Besor, you cannot combine study with prayers like those of Epaphras, would you not choose the latter? The Church of God needs your supplications in these days.

Gal. i. 17.

5. There is still one consideration further for your great comfort. Others have been learning from David and his men; but David himself seems to have been sent to learn in their school on one memorable occasion. When in later years he would fain have wrought a magnificent work for

2 Chron.
vi. 8.

God—the building of a great Temple—the Lord would not permit him to go forward. The Lord (we might say) bade him on this occasion ‘remain behind.’ He must leave the work to Solomon, who should afterwards accomplish it; but David must be content to ‘tarry by the stuff!’ In that hour the Lord comforted him with a message that comes sweetly home to all who, like him, would fain do work for which they have no strength, or opportunity, or means. This gracious message softened the disappointment—*‘Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for My name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart.’*

In every age the Lord has been served by the company of the *Two Hundred*. It would be easy to multiply instances of most devoted servants comforted when laid aside at the brook Besor, when they would have given the world to be on the open field. S. Rutherford could say that there was nothing in the world he so desired as

to be allowed to return to his parish and there proclaim the glorious Gospel. 'But' (he adds) 'if that never be, I thank God, Anwoth is not heaven—preaching is not Christ. I hope to wait on.' 'Now and then my silence burneth up my spirit. I am sad, dwelling in Kedar's tents. But Christ hath said to me, "Thy stipend is running up with interest in heaven, as if thou wert preaching." And this from a King's mouth rejoiceth my heart.'

Letter 96.

Letter 97.

But more than even these consolations may fall to your lot. Let me quote from a work entitled 'Submission and its Reward: A Memoir of Alice Johnstone. Annan, 1863.' We read of this devoted lady (obliged to keep the house when every inmate was at the Missionary Meeting) 'spending the time in prayer for the speakers and hearers, and wrestling with God for a missionary spirit to herself.' 'Here am I—send me!' is her heart's desire. She rises early on a Sabbath morning to plead for the heathen. 'I feel as if I could not

Page 152.

possibly cease to pray that I may be sent to the heathen to tell them of the love of Jesus.' 'With my hands I will minister to the wants of the poor—with my feet I will go from door to door carrying the Message of Truth—with my tongue I will teach transgressors the Way—my eyes shall not feast on the fashions of life, nor on the faults of others; they shall be employed in the study of God's Word—my ears shall listen to the Gospel sound and to the cry of distress.' Soon after a fine field was opened, but delicate health and the interference of friends completely forbade her entrance. Still the flame burned higher and higher. 'Oh, how I love precious souls—poor perishing souls! Thou, Lord, hast given me this love!' Notwithstanding, it pleased the Lord to deny her wish. She was twenty years under the rod. Her *desire* was accepted, but *she* was not sent to work herself. Nevertheless, *all these twenty years* she most patiently continued to pray on and believe the Lord; and when, in 1861,

the whole town of Annan seemed awakened, all who knew her felt that the windows of heaven had been opened over the town *very much in answer to her cries*. And how blessed her testimony when writing—‘I shall one day, ere long, be lifted out of the furnace with not a hair of my head singed; withdrawn by that same Son of Man whom I have ever had with me in the furnace, and the beams of whose countenance have ever shone on me. Nothing ever intercepted my bright vision of Him but sin.’ And ere she finished her course she was enabled to recognise God’s purpose in holding her back from foreign fields, and to write—‘These three years I have felt myself constrained to pray and cry to God for this awakening in such a manner as I never did for any other thing. Praise to Thy Name! Thou hadst a purpose in refusing to allow me active labour. Adored be Thy grace for this great blessing to my fellows, in answer to my strong cries!’

O man of God! are you a Tro-

phimus laid aside? Are you a missionary or a minister to whom the summons has come to cease from active labour? Will you not try to open the windows of heaven over India, China, Africa, Israel (beloved for their fathers' sake), over earth at large? And is not this work of the rarest value and highest importance—work which falls to the lot of none more truly than the Two Hundred at the brook?

6. In all this, saints so dealt with are passing through an experience that teaches themselves peculiar lessons, and sets Divine truth in a light that others are not favoured with. Often some views of Christ's person and work, such as prisoners for Christ and exiles have got, are their portion, making their sick chamber a very palace. At other times, with less emotion and deep feeling, there are discoveries imparted that sustain and enlarge the soul wonderfully. It is, as in the case of persecutions, when

the believer suffers reproach and pain, 'The *Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon them*,' shedding down and breathing through their souls calm peace and silent joy; and as when the disciples were exposed to a fierce storm in Antioch of Pisidia, the Spirit filled them with joy—in the time of trouble He hides them in His pavilion; He takes them far in,—'in the secret of His Tabernacle He hides them.'

1 Pet. iv. 14.

Acts xiii. 51,
52.

Ps. xxvii. 5.

Chapter IV.

THE REWARDS.

WHAT a pleasant spot *Ziklag* and its neighbourhood became on that day when David, returning with his men, had restored all things ; when peace had come again, and a happy people thronged the streets. Full of thankfulness and generous feeling, David resolved, as he looked on the accumulated spoil they had brought back, to gladden former friends by giving them a share in it. And so a messenger is got ready to travel north as far as *Bethel*, the city in whose neighbourhood Jacob slept and dreamt, carrying a gift with this pleasant salutation, 'Behold ! a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.' Another messenger is despatched on a like errand to a town near at hand, *South*

1 Sam. xxx.
27.

Ramoth ; another rides away to *Eshtemoa*, and another to the different towns of the *Jerahmeelites* and the *Kenites*. The friends at *Hebron* are not forgotten ; indeed, no one of all David's tried friends, 'in all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.'

1 Sam. xxx.
31.

This generous-hearted giver, David 'the beloved' (who afterwards outstripped himself so far that he is beyond question the man of all other men in the Church of God who gave most liberally to the cause of God in his lifetime¹), is a true type of our Beloved, whose characteristic saying was, '*More blessed to give than to receive.*' What a time of gifts shall be the day of His return in peace to our world, when He has put down all enemies and assumed the kingdom ! Not a friend forgotten ! No 'cup of cold water given in the

Matt. x. 42.

¹ Of what he won in battle he gave for the future Temple a sum of gold equal to all the bullion in the Bank of England ; and, altogether, his gifts amounted to twenty or thirty millions.

2 Tim. i. 18.

er. xxxix.
17, 18.
Matt. xxv.
36.

Jer. xlv. 5.

name of a disciple' forgotten. *Onesiphorus* shall not be forgotten in that day; it shall be mentioned before all the world that he was not ashamed of Paul's 'chain,' but sought him out in the Mamertine prison at Rome, and then at another time ministered unto him 'in many things' at Ephesus. They who helped 'our David's men' are had in remembrance. Shall *Ebed-melech* be forgotten, he who risked credit, and position, and life for Jeremiah? Or *Baruch*, who nobly stood side by side with the weeping prophet in days of trial? If, wherever David himself and his men were wont to haunt, thither came a messenger with a grateful acknowledgment of past service, assuredly our King and Captain is not one who will overlook any weariness endured, and service done, loss incurred, suffering borne, work performed, for His name.

When we return to the brook Besor and the company we left there, we find they were not forgotten for a moment, even as they never for a moment for-

got their captain and those with him. Those *Two Hundred* watched and waited for the return of the host, and for tidings of their success, as you, believer, welcome every paragraph that narrates a conversion, and every page of the 'Missionary Record' that records 'captivity led captive.'

No doubt these true-hearted followers often imagined that they discerned the ensign of their leader on the horizon, but were disappointed, after they had persuaded themselves that the sound of the returning hosts was heard.

'Long had they waited—that little band—

And ever and anon

To Fancy's eye the dawn seemed nigh,

The night seemed almost gone.

'And often through the midnight gale

They thought they heard at last

The sound of His train, and they listened again,

And the sound died away on the blast.'

At last, one day an unusual cloud of dust is seen darkening the air, and beyond doubt now it is the ensign of David that they see; it is his victorious hosts whose shouts they hear from afar!

And they haste to go forth and meet them. They see them laden with spoil, for not only have they recovered all that was lost, as well as sons and daughters and wives, but they have won flocks and herds far beyond what they ever before possessed.

When David drew near these Two Hundred, he at once most kindly 'asked them how they did' (margin). He feels for them, knowing well how wistfully they are gazing on the warriors who fought the battle,—even on their very wounds. He, on his part, is anxious to make them know how he cares for them, and how he has had them in his thoughts. But there were some evil ones, some sons of Belial, who 'had gone with David,' seeking their own glory and their own interest only, and to them the thought at once occurred, 'Can it be the case that our too generous master will give away part of the spoil to these that went not with us? Nay, since they went not with us, we will not give aught of the spoil that we have received, save

to every man his wife and children. Let them lead these away and go.' But David hastened to stifle such an ungenerous, unbrotherly suggestion. 'We shall not do so, my brethren, with that which we have not won ourselves, but which the Lord hath given us—that Lord who hath preserved us, and delivered into our hand the company that came against us.' And with vehement indignation he went on to say, 'Who will hearken unto you in this matter? but *as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff. They shall part alike.*'

Had those who tarried behind not pitied the captives as keenly as did those who went down to the battle? Had they not abhorred Amalek as truly and loved Israel as well? Had they not watched and prayed for their brethren? Have they not in purpose and desire been one with the Four Hundred?¹ All this David knew and took

¹ Psalm lxxxiv. 5, 6, may come in here. 'Blessed are they in whose heart are the ways

1 Sam. xxx.
25.

Ps. lxxviii. 12.

into account ; and that day there went forth a memorable enactment for all time to come in regard to all the followers of David : ‘ *It was so from that day forward, that he made a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.*’ This is the law of the kingdom, this brotherly rule. In the Psalms of Zion the Psalmist looks back to the brook of Besor when he sings, ‘ Kings of armies did flee apace, and he that tarried at home divided the spoil.’

Thus it was when David came to divide the spoil that day. And if he was generous and noble and overflowing in his kindly sympathy, what shall we say of our David, God’s Beloved ? The Antitype exceeds the type a thousandfold. As far as ‘ the Lamb of God ’ excelled all the typical sacrifices laid on the altar, so does our David, in heart and in gifts, infinitely excel him who was His type and shadow. Who

of those who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well.’ Though they cannot themselves take the journey, their heart is with those who go—and so they are blessed.

can attempt to speak of His heart and of His gifts?

• On that day when He returns, not one of His Two Hundred shall be unrewarded; '*but as his part who went down to the battle, so shall his part be who tarried by the stuff.*' Your lonely watching, your patient-borne solitude, your prayers and tears for His Church, when no eye saw but Himself. Oh, the full reward that day! 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; *enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*' You traded well at the brook Besor with the talents given you, and He is more than satisfied.

Matt. xxv.
23.

It is likely the Two Hundred would go up with David to Hebron and Jerusalem, and share in the glory of His kingdom. An any rate, our David's company of faint and lonely ones shall shine bright in His kingdom. Whatever they did for Him, He will most surely reward.

There is a legend of the Middle Ages

from which we may draw an illustration. It runs thus: There was a king of Castile, or some such realm, that would build a cathedral rich and magnificent. He said it was for the Lord, but he wished to have for himself all the credit of building it; and so he forbade every one in the city and province to help in the work. All must be done by the king alone and his house. In due time it was finished, and a tablet at the door of the cathedral proclaimed who was the generous builder. On the evening of that very day when it was opened the king dreamt a dream. He thought he saw his cathedral, of which he was so vain, rearing its height in proud splendour, bathed in sunshine; but, on coming near to read his name on the tablet as the founder, he could not find it; nay, he saw that his own name had been erased, and instead there appeared the name of a poor widow whose house was in some lane of the city. He awoke, and falling asleep again, dreamt the same dream. Awaking, vexed and astonished, he

tried to shake off his uneasy feelings ; but a third time (says the legend) the same dream returned. Hereupon at morning he sent for one of his counselors, bidding him seek out the obscure, lonely widow whose name he had read in his sleep. When she had come before him, confused and alarmed, he asked in great excitement if she did not know that all were forbidden but the king and his house to put their hand to one stone of the fabric, and insisted on knowing in what manner she had interfered. Her reply was very simple. ' She heard that that building was for the Lord, and she loved the Lord whose house it was to be. On a warm day, one of the horses that were drawing the stones to their place halted at the door of her poor abode ; upon which she brought out a wisp of hay and held it up to its mouth, just because it was helping that work which was for the glory of the Lord ! ' The king's countenance fell ; he knew that he had not laboured simply for God's glory, whereas this poor *widow had*

done what she could, and done it for no other motive whatever but love to the Lord. And it was she that got the reward! It was she that built that fabric! It was she whose name must be written on that tablet!

The day of the Lord is near. It may be that many shall meet with strange surprises that day. 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.' He will reward on that day such '*thoughts*' as that of David, who would fain have reared the Temple, but was not permitted. He must be intending to make something even of your 'tears,' for they are in His bottle; and of all your 'wanderings,' for they are in His book.

'No chastening' (whether in the form of sickness, or pain, or bereavement, or neglect, or poverty, or any other such), 'no chastening for the present has the look of a thing of joy, but of grief rather; *nevertheless, afterwards*, it worketh peaceable fruit of righteousness' in the case of those who are passed through this exercise—sent

Matt. xx. 16.

2 Chron. vi. 8.

Ps. lvi. 8.

Heb. xii. 11.

to the brook Besor to remain behind for a season till David return ; and then at last they shall be more than satisfied that all was well.

Analogies have been suggested in *the ground left fallow*, that afterwards it may bear the richer crop ; and in *the potter's vessel*, when, apparently well finished and the painting complete, it is subjected, even oftener than once, to the fire, that a deeper and more lasting work may be produced after going through the fire. Some one writes thus : ' They had asked to be meek, and He had broken their hearts. They had asked to be dead to the world, and He slew all their living hopes. They had asked to be made like unto Him, and He placed them in the furnace, sitting by as a refiner of silver, till they should reflect His image. They were hardly willing to follow Him. They could almost have prayed that He would depart from them. But He stayed them up against themselves. And now they live alone with Him, in unspeak-

able fellowship, willing to lack what others own, and to be unlike all, so that they may only be like Him. Had they chosen for themselves, or had their friends chosen for them, they would have chosen otherwise. And what would have been the result? *They would have been brighter here, but less glorious in His kingdom.'*

Brethren in the kingdom and patience of Christ, the time is at hand. He will be here in the twinkling of an eye ; and then we shall see the results of bearing burdens that His kind hand laid upon us, and shall receive the high rewards. For here also that saying is true, 'In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.'

Chapter V.

THE PRAISES OF THE LORD.

COULD a band of *David's* men be wanting in praise? We have taken for granted that even at the brook Besor they did not hang their harps on the willows. Many a time would the strain heard there be little different from Psalm xlii. 11 :

'Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God (*i.e.*, expect much from
God),
For I shall yet praise Him,
Who is the health of my countenance,
And my God !'

It would be thus even in their loneliest hours. But what would their songs be when they left Besor, and were with David in Hebron and Jerusalem?

There is not one of you all, ye sick, and feeble, and neglected, and obscure, desolate, and lonely, but '*shall yet*

Vaughan's
'Songs in the
Night.'

praise Him. Only, wait not altogether till then. Perhaps you take up the harp, and it sounds :—

' I cannot praise Thee now, Lord,
I cannot praise Thee now !
For my heart is sorely riven,
And a cloud is on my brow.
But praise is waiting for Thee
In the glorious future time,
Amid the bright revealings
When Zion's hill we climb.

' I cannot praise Thee here, Lord,
I cannot praise Thee here !
For my pathway lies through shadows,
And my heart is lone and drear.
But praise is waiting for Thee
When the pilgrimage is past,
And at our home in glory
We gather in at last.'

But the harp can sound another strain.
Let us listen :

' And I will praise Thee there, Lord,
When Zion's heights I gain !
But might I not be tuning
A prelude to the strain ?
While praise is waiting for Thee,
Thou'lt lend a listening ear
To its low and faint rehearsal,
In faltering accents here.

‘ Then let me praise Thee now, Lord,
In the dark and cloudy day !
Though sad and sore disquieted
By reason of the way.
For the praise that’s waiting for Thee
Good cause shall yet appear,
And I’ll wake the golden harp-strings
Beneath the falling tear.’

Let me relate the exercises of one of your band—John Janeway—who was laid in the tomb in 1657, at the age of twenty-three, in Kelshall Church, Hertfordshire. He had longed to be a preacher of the glorious Gospel, but only twice was he permitted to proclaim Christ when sickness arrested him. It was a severe trial to lie sick, like Trophimus, while others were sent forth like Naphtali to be ‘hinds let loose, giving goodly words.’ But he lay at the brook, satisfied and well pleased with his Lord’s will. He began to be filled with the love of God his Saviour to an extraordinary degree all day long. When friends came to see him, he would beg of them to spend all the time that they had in *praise*. ‘*Oh, help me to praise God !* I have now nothing

else to do, from this time to eternity, but to praise and love God.' 'Oh, *praise, praise, praise* that infinite, boundless love that hath to a wonder looked upon my soul and done more for me than for thousands of His dear children ! Oh, bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me ! bless His holy name ! Oh help me, help me, oh, my friends, to praise and admire Him that hath done such astonishing wonders for my soul ! He hath pardoned all my sins ; He hath filled me with His goodness ; He hath given me grace and glory ; and no good thing hath He withheld from me !' Again, 'Come, *help me with praises !* all is too little. Come, help me, oh, ye glorious and mighty angels who are so well skilled in this heavenly work of *praise !* Praise Him, all ye creatures upon the earth ; let everything that hath being help me to praise Him. *Hallelujah ! Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !*'

'Bring a Bible. Turn to David's Psalms, and let us sing a psalm of praise. Come, let us lift up our voice

in the praise of the Most High. I will join with you as long as my breath doth last ; and when I have none, I shall do it better.'

According to his desire (says the relative who writes the account), most of the time that was spent with him was spent in *praise*. 'More praise still ! Oh, help me to praise Him !' would be his cry. And in his last days he seemed almost to have joined the company before the Throne. 'Methinks I stand, as it were, with one foot in heaven and the other upon earth. Methinks I hear the melody of heaven ; and by faith I see the angels waiting to carry my soul to the bosom of Jesus ; and I shall be for ever with the Lord in glory. And who can choose but rejoice in all this !' In one of his rapturous utterances he cried, 'I shall presently be beholding Christ Himself that died for me, and loved me, and washed me in His blood. I shall be singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. I shall stand upon Mount Zion with

an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people (and He one amongst them), which shall say, "Hallelujah! salvation, glory, honour, and power unto the Lord our God!" And again we shall say, "Hallelujah!" Yet a very little while and I shall sing unto the Lamb a song of praise, saying, "Worthy art Thou to receive praise who wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests;" and we shall reign with Him for ever and ever!'

The minister who was his pastor declared that he seemed already on Mount Pisgah, enjoying a full sight of the goodly land. 'His heart was in a mighty flame of love and joy. Oh, the *praise, the triumphant praises* that he put up! And every one about him must *speak praise*, or else they did make some jar in the harmony. And,

indeed, most did (as well as they could) help him in praise, so that I never heard nor knew more praise given to God in one room than in his chamber.'

And might not this praise be far more abundant on the part of all who are of our David's band? It is written in Hebrews xiii. 15, 'Let us offer by Him the sacrifice of praise *continually*,' that is, like the *continual* daily burnt-offering. The Psalmist is heard saying, 'Seven times a day do I praise Thee.' Many a temptation has been baffled by a song of praise; many a difficulty has been faced successfully, and many a sorrow calmed.

One note of praise from His lonely ones is as sweet to the Lord as the loud song of the great multitude in heaven. In the songs above, 'One cries to another, Holy, holy, holy;' that is, there pervades all their adoration an undertone to this effect, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.' And if there be in your heart and in your song that calm acquiescence which was in

Ps. cxix. 164.

Isa. vi. 3.
Rev. iv. 8.

Ps. xxii. 3.

the heart of Jesus, when amid all His love and desolation, '*But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*' Thus, your note shall sound as heavenly as theirs, for you are joining them in their cry, 'Holy, holy, holy.'

It may be good to dwell upon this theme while still lingering at the brook Besor.

Ps. cxlvii. 1.

There are many things that might be said about praise; but you remember the Psalms have given us three statements that may guide us. The Book of Psalms says, 'Praise is PLEASANT;' it says again, 'It is GOOD to sing praise;' and again it says, 'Praise is COMELY.'

1st, Praise is 'pleasant.' You know it is pleasant to yourselves; but 'praise is pleasant' means more than that. It means it is pleasant to God; it is something that God is pleased with. Have you not noticed that though Solomon offered up that remarkable *prayer* in the Temple recorded in 2 Chron. vi., yet the blessing did not come down

then : it was not till a little after, *when the multitude of singers* were as one in giving forth their praise, and saying, 'The Lord is good, and His mercy endureth for ever.' The cloud of glory came down and filled the Temple as they uttered that burst of praise. And in the history of King Jehoshaphat going forth to battle against Ammon, Moab, and Seir, Jehoshaphat's remarkable prayer is recorded at full length. Still it is not then that the victory or the assurance of victory comes ; but as he marched out of Jerusalem down the valley of Tekoah to where he expected to meet the enemy, they made the valley resound with songs. It is said he consulted with the people, and instead of going forth with common martial music, they agreed they would march down the valley with the Lord's song on their lips : and the burden of it is, 'For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.' Now, it is added, and *when the song began*, 'The Lord set an ambushment against Moab, and Ammon, and Seir,' and Israel did not need

2 Chron. xx.

to fight ; they just came up and gathered the spoil.

Rev. v. 8.

See the honour God put upon true praise rendered to Himself. Prayer must ever be followed or accompanied by praise. Prayer by itself (the Lord seems to say) is very well, but He wants praise ; He must have *the harp* as well as *the golden vial* full of odour. We must now have both, as well as those that stand before the Lamb.

Acts xvi. 25.

And in the prison of Philippi what do we find ? There were Paul and Silas praying. Yes, but they 'sang praises,' and the emphasis is put upon the *praises*. It is said the prisoners heard them, or perhaps more correctly, at least more emphatically, it is, 'And the prisoners were listening.' You can see them awaking, and expressing wonder to each other, and putting their ear to the door of their cell. The prisoners were listening ! for songs in a prison, and such songs—songs of Zion—had never been heard there before. And it was then that the earthquake shook the prison ; and the Lord came

down and converted the jailer, a man memorable in the Church of God, and who will be memorable till the Lord comes. Praise is 'pleasant' to the Lord, as well as pleasing to us.

But again, *2dly*, Praise is 'good;' it is sanctifying. There is something in it tending to build up the soul in sanctification. How could it be otherwise? Praise is the element of heaven. If so, much of this praise must be much of heaven. What are some of the elements of heaven? Surely one is joy—holy joy, joy in the Lord. Now, nothing sanctifies more than this joy. Mere sorrow never sanctifies; sorrow, indeed, turns us away from earthly good, but in itself the sorrow of the world worketh death. What sanctifies? 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; *while we look not* at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.' It is joy to which we are led by sorrow that sanctifies—joy

2 Cor. iv. 17.
18.

in the Lord, joy that is the element of heaven.

There is something unselfish in praise. You can suppose prayer to have selfishness in it, and the Lord does not object to a kind of selfishness in our prayers ; that is, our seeking that we ourselves may be receivers of His blessing. But praise is more unselfish, more heaven-like, more, therefore, like Jesus ; it is a giving forth of what we have received. And further ; only sing praise truly, and there will be little discontent. Is there a better remedy for discontent than praise, true praise ? Where are your murmurs when you are singing praise ? Oh, if those that fret and are discontented at little things, or at great things, would only substitute praise, they would soon know it is good to give thanks ! Praise is sanctifying ; praise chases away hard thoughts of God, which even good men often call '*infirmities*,' but which are really downright corruption, and dishonouring to God, as much as were the murmurs in the camp of Israel.

3dly, And then praise is 'comely.' You will at once own that praise is very becoming. Only withhold it, and you will see at once what a position you are in. Would it be grateful? Would you feel as if you were putting yourself in a right position? A good man once said, in a tone of sarcasm, 'I think some Christian people are going to make *heaven* the place of gratitude, and mean to keep all their gratitude till they get there, they show so little here.' Praise is comely. Then to withhold it is most unseemly. Most unseemly in any circumstances; for, whatever may be your position as a saint of God, or your position in the world, whatever may be your afflictions, or whatever your circumstances, praise is still comely. Every saint is expected in *all* circumstances to be able to praise continually. Yet it is not the case that all saints always do. One of our old Scotch writers, John Livingstone, said in his day, '*A line of praise is worth a page of prayer,*' because he found it such a rare thing. Do you

think he exaggerated? He wished to stir up believers to praise more. And you notice in the Book of Psalms, as it gets near its close, prayer is almost forgotten; the four last psalms are a joyous burst of praise. The stream when it is just about to join the ocean is all praise, praise to God.

Let me say further, Are you *afflicted*? You cannot do wrong in singing praise. It is told of a Welsh girl that her father had died, and the mother came out of the room weeping. The child said, 'Mother, what is the matter?' 'Oh, what shall I do, my child? oh, what shall I do?' 'Mother, what is the matter?' 'Your father is dead, child, and what shall I do?' The child looked up in the mother's face, and said, 'Mother, praise the Lord, praise the Lord.' The mother was reproved: she went away and she tried to praise; she began to praise the Lord for what was left, and as she began to praise the Lord for what was left to her, she soon found that the burden of her heart was lifted off. The

Lord was left ; the Lord with all His grace was still her possession. She was in the position of Habakkuk, who sings, ' Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' And then he inscribed his song, ' To the chief singer upon my stringed instruments.' Is not that a pattern for us ? Afflicted one, praise the Lord, and tell your afflicted friends to try to praise the Lord.

Have you to face some special difficulty, or have you *some special duty* on hand ? Then try praise as a preface. You know what they do when armies march. What did the Germans do in their last war ? what did the French do ? Had they not a military song ? Did not the Germans sing the ' Watch on the Rhine ? ' and did not the French sing the ' Marseillaise ' ? What should Christian armies do ? What did our Captain

Matt. xxvi.
30.

do before He went to the Mount of Olives, and as He went to the Garden of Gethesemane, the sorest of His conflicts? *He sung a hymn*—the Master sang a hymn with His disciples. We are almost sure what it was; it was the 118th Psalm, for that was the psalm with which the Passover service was concluded; in that psalm you find this burst of praise (think of the Master singing it): 'The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live.' Try that in going out to battle! in facing difficulties, try praise.

Anxious souls, try praise. But it is well to guard myself against being misunderstood, for in our day there are too many persons prayed into peace, and there are a great number sung into peace. This peace may be worth nothing. It is excitement; it is not peace founded on the Word, it is peace founded on the feelings. Peace, if it is not founded on the testimony of God

concerning His Son, if it is not founded upon what the Father testifies regarding the accepted offering of His beloved Son, is not a solid peace. Tell anxious souls to try praise; at the same time, point out to them this aspect of the matter—tell them to praise the Lamb; tell them to praise Him because He offered Himself as the sacrifice; tell them to fix their eye upon His blood. For, you notice, in the very act of so doing they have forgotten self. Self-forgotten, it is the Lamb that is remembered; worthy is the Lamb! I am all unworthiness; worthy is the Lamb! They have got at what they sought. It is analogous to a case that it may be useful to mention. A gentleman in the North never could agree with his friends about full assurance of salvation. He always said, 'I wish I had it, but I cannot get it.' In the providence of God, he was led—I do not remember how—to study very much the subject of the Second Coming of the Lord. He got deeply interested in it; and when he had got so interested that he

could not help talking of it to others, he came up one day to a friend, and said, 'Do you know, a most remarkable thing has happened to me. I began to study that subject for its own sake; but in doing so I have entered into full assurance.' And here was the explanation: 'My whole mind got fixed on Christ: I forgot myself, and ever since then have found that here is the secret of direct assurance.' It will be even so with this other case: set the anxious soul to sing to *the Lamb*, and if that soul is enabled to do it, it forgets itself, and enters into peace.

But it is *not every one that can sing!* Can THE UNSAVED sing? In this present day, one of the devil's snares—and the devil is going about, not so much as a raging lion as like a subtle serpent, 'deceiving the whole world,' and all the more because his time is so short—is music. Everything is music! And they think HEAVEN is simply a place of MUSIC! Are you among those who like to hear about the songs of heaven, but who do not care to

hear of the song that a soul sings when it gets its feet on the rock? Take care lest you be among the unsaved. What does Paul say? 'Make melody;' but how? 'in your hearts.' And that is not all; he says, 'with grace'—singing *with grace in your heart* to the Lord. You cannot sing the Lord's song till you have grace in your heart, till you have got the discovery of the free love of God to sinners through His Son. Have you got that? If you continue as you are, you cannot join the song of the redeemed to the Lamb, because you have never counted Him worthy of your heart. If you love your music so well, but love the Lamb so little, instead of joining in that song when the great multitude shall appear with Christ our Head, raising their voices loud as many waters and as mighty thunderings, you will just hear it *at a distance* for a moment or two, and then go down into the outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth—ceaseless weeping, eternal wailing, everlasting

Col. iii. 16.

gnashing of teeth at your own folly in having missed the day of your opportunity. Do not be deceived by the delight of singing, as if, because you could sing a pleasant hymn, therefore you were one that could sing the new song.

Rev. xv. 3.

Isa. xxx. 27,
29.

One other remark. *There is a song in reserve for David's Two Hundred and for all his band.* Christ is coming, and there is to be a song then, such as we have never yet sung. The song of Moses we know something of, but it is at the sea of glass that we shall sing the song of the Lamb also. Christ sang when He was on earth. We referred to His singing before He went out to the Mount of Olives; and it is said of His people that they too shall have a song on that day when Christ comes—a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept. Now, what may we think regarding that song? If the Lord Jesus, at the first coming in the night in which He instituted the Lord's Supper, Himself *gave thanks* in the name of God's Church for after ages,

did He not also *sing that hymn* mentioned in Matt. xxvi. 30 ; for none could sing as He did? Who would not have liked to have heard Him singing in the Upper Room? Who would not have drawn near the Upper Room to have heard Him sing that song before He went to the garden? We cannot, however, enjoy this gratification ; but there is a song in reserve for us which Christ will lead. Yes ! Christ will sing this song Himself. It is said in the 22d Psalm, '*In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee ;*' and again, 'My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation.' What will it be to hear Christ singing then, leading the song of praise, and inviting all His ransomed to join Him ! Our voices are only tuning now for that day when we shall join Him in 'The Song of the Lamb'—a song which will be for ever and ever. Oh, the joy of that hour when the redeemed (our David's band) hold up their vials full of *prayers*, which are to be all answered, to Him who has risen up to give at last 'exceed-

Rev. v. 8.

ing abundantly above all we ask or think.' But remember, *every one* of these has a *harp* also, ready to pour out praises that shall never end—praises *for past days at the Brook Besor*, as well as for the bright, blissful days now begun in New Jerusalem by the banks of the river that flows from the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

Chapter VI.

THE LORD'S MESSAGE, "FEAR NOT."

IT may complete the comfort of some of the lonely ones, if we leave with them a cluster of gracious messages occurring in the form of 'FEAR NOT' all through the Word, each testifying how greatly the faint and weary are cared for.

A well-known sacred poet sings—

'There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs !

None loves them best !—O vain and foolish sigh.

Out of the bosom of His love He spares,

The Father spares, the Son for thee to die.

Thou art as much His care as if beside

Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth.'

As you read and ponder the 'FEAR NOTS' of Holy Scripture, surely the conviction of this truth will be deepened in your soul.

A less-known singer¹ (daughter of Dr. Chalmers) has beautifully reminded you that the Christian's hymn of praise is sung by many voices, and each voice has its place in the great multitude. Some may sing in loud trumpet-notes, and others 'in broken tones and low.'

'O weep not that thy life
Is wasting all away—
God calleth some to holy strife;
Some to be still and pray.

'His hymn is sung in parts
Over the whole wide earth—
Deep warblings from a million hearts,
Springing in sacred mirth.'

As you take up these sixty 'FEAR NOTS' which we are leaving with you for meditation, you cannot fail to find your own part in the great hymn of praise. But remember that God's promises are all Yea and Amen '*in Christ Jesus.*' See that you take them all from the hand of Jesus. Let the Owner of the Vineyard give you the

¹ 'The Road and the Resting-place.' By Grace Pratt Chalmers. 1864.

grapes. Is Christ yours? Then His promises are yours.

1. *'Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.'*

Gen. xv. 1.

The first time in the Bible 'FEAR NOT' occurs. It is spoken to a sinner who at once believed God when He told him of the Promised Seed. It is for thee, also, who believest in that Promised One.

2. *'Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is.'*

Gen. xxi. 17.

The second time in the Bible 'FEAR NOT' occurs. It is kindly spoken to one who had had already found favour with the Angel of the Covenant. Has He taken away thy great burden of sin? Then, 'What aileth thee, Hagar? FEAR NOT'—He will order this providence for good.

Gen. xvi. 10.

3. *'Fear not; for I am with thee, and will bless thee.'*

Gen. xxvi. 24.

Spoken to Isaac, who had Abraham's God as his God. Hast thou annoyance

from envious neighbours? If the God of Isaac is thine, this 'FEAR NOT' is for thee. Thou shalt prosper.

Gen. xliii.
23.

4. *'Fear not; your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure.'*

God removes our suspicious alarms, as Joseph did those of his brethren, here and in chap. l. 19, by showing us that He has got full payment, and has thoughts of love toward us. Just as Boaz removed fear from Ruth, by telling what was in his heart; and as David dispelled Abiathar's, by declaring that now he had on his side one who would die sooner than see him injured.

Ruth iii. 11.

1 Sam. xxii.
23.

Gen. xli. 3.

5. *'Fear not to go down into Egypt.'*

Spoken to Jacob, about to proceed on a journey in his old age, under circumstances of anxiety. *'I am God; FEAR NOT!'* This is enough for thee, who knowest by experience that thy God has saved thy soul.

Ex. xiv. 13.

6. *'Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.'*

To Israel at the Red Sea. Has God made the path of duty plain to thee? Then hesitate not to trust Him to carry thee through it. Thy way will open out as thou advancest. How different the event when man, and not God, speaks. Those that stood by Rachel, like those who stood by Phinehas' daughter, said 'FEAR NOT;' yet death did come. And Jael met Sisera with the same words; but the end was death, for it was not God who spoke.

Gen. xxxv.
17.
1 Sam. iv. 20.
Judg. iv. 18.

7. *'Fear not; for God is come to prove you, that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.'*

Ex. xx. 20.

At Sinai, when the people so felt the law and majesty of God as to cry out for a Mediator. Art thou feeling the same? Let it send thee to the Mediator, Jesus, in whom thy sin is hidden. The Blood casts out fear and brings into thy soul the Spirit of holiness.

8. *'Fear them not.'*

So spake Caleb and Joshua in the

Num. xiv. 9.

wilderness of Paran, when called to face the Anakim, and other most formidable difficulties ; for they felt ' The Lord is with us.' The Lord had shown it to be their duty to face their foes ; and we may always say, ' If God be for us, who can be against us?'

Num. xxi.
34.

9. '*Fear him not ; for I have delivered him into thine hand, and all his people, and all his land.*'

This was spoken at Edrei, when Israel was called to fight with Og. A word from heaven in season.

Deut. i. 21.

10. '*Fear not ; neither be discouraged.*'

Be not even 'discouraged,' far less 'afraid.' God's word to Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, after their experience of His goodness in 'the great and terrible wilderness.' Has He led thee hither-to? Wilt thou now fear?

Deut. i. 19.

Deut. xx. 3.

11. '*Fear not, and do not make haste.*' (Margin.)

Spoken to Israel going out to fight with the 'horses and chariots' of the

foe. He that believeth in the love and omnipotence of Jehovah '*makes not haste*'—is not hurried and agitated—but is calm and fearless. See Isa. xxviii. 16.

12. '*Fear not, nor be afraid of them, for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee ; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.*'

Deut. xxxi.
6.

The Lord's message by Moses to the people whose duty it would be to engage in the wars of Canaan. Of course, He Himself goes with us on His own work.

13. '*Fear not, neither be dismayed.*'

Deut. xxxi.
8.

Moses applying God's general word to Joshua individually. We are to apply God's general message to individual cases. As John, in his Second Epistle, applies to the Elect Lady, what, in the first, he had written for all.

14. '*Fear them not ; for I have delivered them into thine hand : there shall not a man of them stand before thee.*'

Josh. x. 8.

The Lord to Joshua on the morning of that memorable day whereon He made sun and moon stand still. What will He not do for His own? He who spared not His own Son has already done for you, believer, greater things than stopping sun and moon. Can you, then, FEAR?

Josh. x. 25.

15. *'Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong and of a good courage; for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.'*

Spoken at Makkedah, on the evening of that memorable day of which the last verse told us the wonders, so fitted to strengthen faith.

Judg. vi. 10.

16. *'Fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.'*

A prophet in the days of Gideon telling God's people of their safety amid false religions and frowning neighbours. Oh, to know in a realising way 'the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe.'

Eph. i. 19.

17. *'Fear not; thou shalt not die.'*

Judg. vi. 23.

To Gideon at Ophrah, when overawed by God's discoveries of Himself. These discoveries were meant to lead him to the altar of sacrifice, and there he was able to say of this glorious God, '*Jehovah Shalom,*' '*Jehovah is peace.*' Peace by the blood of the slain Lamb!

18. *'Fear not. Ye have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord.'*

1 Sam. xx.
20.

Samuel at Gilgal. When sin has been confessed at the altar, God is ready to forgive.

1 Sam. xi. 15.

19. *'Fear not; for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake.'*

2 Sam. ix. 7.

David acts on the principle on which his God acted toward him. Our God dispels our fears by assuring us of His being able (His heart able, His hand able) to show us kindness for the sake of His Beloved Son.

20. *'Fear not; go and do as thou hast said.'*

1 Kings xvii.
13.

Elijah to the widow who was called upon, in the name of the Lord, to give up all visible means of support. If the Lord put thee to a severe test of faith, nevertheless, go on fearlessly.

2 Kings vi.
16.

21. *'Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.'*

Matt. xxvii.
53.

Elisha to his young man. Remember these words, whoever of you is afraid of evil befalling God's servants. The Master's 'twelve legions of angels' are ready to help us.

2 Kings xxv.
24.

22. *'Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.'*

Gedaliah's words to the feeble remnant, founded on his belief of the promise made by God in Jer. xxvii. 11, 12.

2 Chron. xx.
17.

23. *'Fear not, nor be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you.'*

Jahaziel's word to Jehoshaphat and

his company, who had prayed and thrown themselves on the Lord. This is not a vain word, like Absalom's to his servants, inspiring false courage. This is courage from the Lord. The character of the speaker is the pledge of its power.

2 Chron. xx.
12.
2 Sam. xiii.
28.

24. *'Fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the two tails of these smoking firebrands.'*

Isa. vii. 4.

This is Isaiah's message to Ahaz, prefaced by 'Take heed, and be quiet.' The mightiest are silly worms when opposing God's cause.

25. *'Fear not: behold! your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you.'*

Isa. xxxv. 4.

Isaiah's prophetic assurance that all God's people's fears for His cause and for themselves may well be dismissed, when they look forward to the return of Christ.

26. *'Fear not; for I am with thee—I will strengthen thee.'*

Isa. xli. 10.

God to Israel, bidding them not look at the waves, but at Him who says to them, 'Peace, be still.'

Isa. xli. 13.

27. *'Fear not; I will help thee.'*

From the same to the same. Not only is He at hand, He engages also to furnish help, by putting forth His right hand. Just as we may see before our very eyes in the vision of John in Patmos, when He so gently laid on him His hand, and spoke to his heart.

Isa. xli. 14.

28. *'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.'*

A third assurance given. Yes, and to thee, who art 'a worm'! But He does this as '*Redeemer*'; ay, as '*the Holy One*,' showing how much He has the heart to do for 'a worm,' in His redeeming grace. This speaks to thee, also, O my soul!

Isa. xliii. 1.

29. *'Fear not; for I have redeemed*

*thee, I have called thee by thy name ;
thou art Mine.'*

Spoken primarily to the lost sheep of Israel, who were 'a spoil.' Grace visits them ; and see what grace does for the undeserving, familiarly by name addressing each.

Isa. xlii. 24.

30. *'Fear not, for I am with thee ; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west.'*

Isa. xliii. 5.

There is no barrier that can stand in the way of Shiloh, the gatherer of the people, when He rises up.

31. *'Fear not, O Jacob, My servant ; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.'*

Isa. xliv. 2.

Spoken to persons once '*given up to the curse.*' Yes, to that unbelieving people who were sung of as '*Jeshurun, who waxed fat, and kicked.*' Behold ! grace, free grace, visits them, and brings them every blessing. Courage, O my soul !

Isa. xliii. 28.

Deut. xxxii.

15-
Isa. xliv. 3,
4-

32. *'Fear ye not, neither be ye afraid : have not I told thee from that time, and declared it ? ye are My witnesses.'*

Isa. xliv. 8.

Isa. xliii. 28.

All this shall be done for those who once were a 'curse and reproach.' They shall even become My witnesses to the world, says the Lord. How completely He can turn the tide.

Isa. li. 7.

33. '*Fear ye not the reproach of men.*'

See in Gen.
xxxv. 17.

A word to those who are exposed to revilings. And notice; it is *the Lord* who speaks, and hence the comfort. How different when it is only man that tries to console.

Isa. liv. 4.

34. '*Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed.*'

A word to Israel; and to all who have respect to the Lord's great promises of blessing in the coming day of glory.

Jer. xxx. 10.

35. '*Fear thou not, O My servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel; for lo! I will save thee from afar.*'

Jeremiah's message to the remnant in Israel who were ready to lose all hope of Israel ever receiving the bless-

ings foretold by the prophets. Think of what the Lord says. Let us never judge by appearances, but by the testimony of the Word.

36. *'Fear not to serve the Chaldeans.'*

Jer. xl. 9.

See on No. 20. Line upon line is thus sent to fearful hearts. It is He who undertakes to incline men to be kind to us.

37. *'Fear not thou, O My servant Jacob.'*

Jer. xlvi. 27.

See on No. 31. Our God so earnestly desires to banish unbelieving fears, that he lays a command again and again on fearful ones to cease their fears.

38. *'Fear not, O My servant Jacob, saith the Lord; for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure.'*

Jer. xlvi. 28.

What a consoling view of God's sorest discipline towards those on whom His love is set! Discipline is blessing.

Lam. iii. 57.

39. *'Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee; Thou saidst, Fear not.'*

Lam. iii. 56.

Spoken in the ear of Jeremiah in his low dungeon, when he was able sometimes to cry, sometimes to call, and sometimes only to *breathe* his desire.

Ezek. iii. 9.

40. *'Fear them not, neither be afraid at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.'*

Ezek. i. 26.

These are the words of the Son of Man to Ezekiel, when sending him on formidable duty. It is as if He said, I am Son of Man, I know thy difficulties; but I am with thee.'

Ezek. i. 26.

Dan. x. 12.

41. *'Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard.'*

The Son of Man's kind and tender words to Daniel as He strengthened him. To thee, also, praying believer.

Dan. x. 19.

42. *'Fear not; peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong.'*

The same gracious Speaker reiterating His words of grace to the same hearer, as if He said, 'Be far, far from fear! Be full of confidence.'

43. *'Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things.'*

Joel ii. 21.

Joel's prediction of restoring mercy to Israel contains this assurance. Art thou judging by appearances? You might as well judge by the present desolation of Israel's land that it never can be again a land of Beulah. And yet it shall.

44. *'Fear thou not.'*

Zeph. iii. 16.

This is Zephaniah's message to Jerusalem, in which he declares that God's presence and manifested love ought to banish fear in spite of any circumstances.

45. *'Fear ye not.'*

Hag. ii. 5.

Addressed to Zerubbabel and Joshua when exerting themselves to the utmost, yet seeing little accomplished. 'My Spirit remaineth among you.'

Zech. viii.
13.

46. *'Fear not, but let your hands be strong.'*

Zechariah, telling of the curse being so completely removed that Israel shall be not blessed only, but a means of blessing, is bidden say, 'Thy God can do things that man thinks impossible.'

Zech. viii.
15.

47. *'Fear ye not.'*

Jehovah says again, 'Yes, I have thought to do well unto Jerusalem.' In the midst of our fears, let us try to ascertain *God's thoughts*.

Matt. x. 26.

48. *'Fear them not, therefore. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.'*

Christ's words to the calumniated. The Master was treated like you; and a day of redress is at hand.

Matt. x. 28.

49. *'Fear not them which kill the body.'*

As creating power attended His words when He said, 'Let there be light,' so may it be with His words

THE LORD'S MESSAGE.	101
<p>to us at all times as we meditate on them. These words are fitted to create courage in us, even though persecution, or death itself, threaten us.</p>	
<p>50. <i>'Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.'</i></p> <p>Christ's words to all who are frowned on by the world, and threatened. Lord, make these words inspire us with holy courage!</p>	<p>Matt. x. 31.</p>
<p>51. <i>'Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.'</i></p> <p>The angel's words to the two Marys. They are for us also, if we are satisfied with nothing short of the Lord Jesus.</p>	<p>Matt. xxviii. 5.</p>
<p>52. <i>'Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard.'</i></p> <p>Gabriel's message to one who did not at first recognise the answer of former prayers in this overawing visit. 'By terrible things Thou answerest us;' that is, by things that are so great that they fill us with awe.</p>	<p>Luke i. 13.</p> <p>Ps. lxxv. 5.</p>

Luke i. 30.

53. *'Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.'*

Gabriel's words to one who trembled at the very moment she was about to receive the highest honour from her God.

Luke ii. 10.

54. *'Fear not; for, behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'*

The angels to the shepherds. Here is that which may remove all slavish fear for ever. Here is that great Saviour who brings the great atonement proclaimed, sufficient to banish fear from a guilty conscience. Has the news concerning Christ delivered thee from such fear? If fully believed, it cannot fail to have this effect.

Luke v. 10.

55. *'Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men.'*

Christ's words to Peter, who had forgot that Christ deals in overflow-

ing grace with sinful men ; sending them, when He has forgiven them, on the errand of making others know His love. He fills them a full cup of favour, and bids them both drink it themselves and carry it to others also.

56. *'Fear not ; believe only, and she shall be made whole.'*

Luke viii. 50.

Christ to Jairus. O that men would *really* believe the love and power of a Saviour !

57. *'Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'*

Luke xii. 32.

The evangelist Luke, the companion of fearless Paul, has been directed to record very many 'FEAR NOTS.' This one is to banish all fear as to temporal provision while we are on the way to glory. He that gives us the kingdom will give us food.

58. *'Fear not, daughter of Zion : behold ! thy King cometh.'*

John xii. 15.

The evangelist quotes from Zech. ix. 9. And see, in so doing, the Spirit

Matt. xiv.
27.
Mark vi. 50.
John vi. 20.

directs him to put '*Fear not*' for '*Rejoice greatly!*' So that the Lord means us to take these two things as equivalent. It is like Christ's own, '*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*'

Acts xxvii.
24.

59. '*Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar.*'

Even Paul's heart sometimes palpitated. But the word of his God stilled it again. Thou art immortal till thy work is done. If thy God has anything for thee to do for His glory, He will convey thee safely to the spot.

M'Cheyne.

'When first the Saviour wakened me,
And showed me why He died,
He pointed o'er life's narrow sea,
And said, "*To yonder side!*"'

Rev. i. 17.

60. '*Fear not; I am the First and the Last; I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold! I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*'

Do you sometimes think you shall tremble as you pass within the vail? or when the Lord comes in glory? *Fear not!* He will gently lay His hand on you, put strength in you, and show to you Himself—yes, Himself who died, and who liveth evermore! Himself, who has your name on His heart!



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